

## **Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes**

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on June 10, 2009.

### **Members Present:**

Peter Cook  
Amanda Buscas  
Douglas Brimhall

Kit Filbey  
Dr. Kent Layton  
Ramona Tecumseh

### **Members Absent:**

Hector Benitez  
Lars Nielson, Jr.  
Rebecca Nolan  
Andrea Soto

### **Staff Present:**

Johann Zietsman  
Sunnee Spencer

Tom Wilson  
Jean Kaminski

### **Guests Present:**

Vic Linoff

Peter Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Peter Cook, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of April 8. There being none, the Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of April 8. They have been posted on the City's Webpage.

### **Items from Citizens Present:**

There were no citizens presents.

### **Introduction of New Board Member, Kit Filbey – Peter Cook**

Ms. Filbey has lived in Mesa over five years, as well as a number of other states that include CO, WI, MN, and IL. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Denver; runs a Facility Services company out of her home; and has two children – her daughter lives in Florence, Italy, and her son works for the State Department and is currently in Cyro, Egypt. Ms. Filbey is passionate about the arts and stated that she is excited to have the opportunity to be able to give back to Mesa by serving on the Board. Welcome!

### **Information and Discussion – Consider the Implications of the Proposed Move to Combine some of Mesa Historical Museum with the Arizona Museum for Youth – Johann Zietsman**

In April, the Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) and Mesa Historical Museum (MHM) 501(c)(3) Boards informed the City they could no longer sustain funding after July 1; the Arts and Cultural Department was faced with having to craft an urgent solution to present to City Council on April 30 (in less than two weeks) or face the possibility of closing both Museums.

After meeting with the two Boards, a solution was presented to Council, which council approved. Attached is the "Fact Sheet" (Exhibit A) outlining the parallel challenges and parallel solutions for the two Museums that accompanied a Power Point presentation to Council, as well as a "Fact Sheet" (Exhibit B) from the City's Public Information & Communication Office.

There were no questions asked on the documents that were included in the Board member's monthly packet; however, Peter Cook, Chair, asked what the current status was. Mr. Zietsman responded that, currently, the Mesa Historical Museum is slated to close. As of July 1, Lisa Anderson, current director of the MHM, will assume a City position and join the staff at AMY. For the time being, Ms. Anderson will focus on closing the Historical Museum, taking inventory of their collections, cataloguing them, look at possible opportunities throughout the City to place some of their collections, and store the remainder. The exhibit "Play Ball" will come to AMY in February 2010. Once that is accomplished, Ms. Anderson will focus on incorporating historical elements within future exhibitions at AMY, Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA), and the Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH). For the historic exhibitions, she will be supported by Rob Schultz, Assistant Arts and Cultural Director. No one wants to see Mesa lose their history and this solution will ensure that doesn't happen.

The City will take ownership of the MHM on July 1; it will be locked, secured, insured, and used for storage until such time that money allows for a more productive use of the space. Franklin Charter School will continue to rent the auditorium space for their use.

Sunnee Spencer, Youth Museum Administrator, stated that the key players from the Museums are working on a strategic alliance for the two Museums. They want to ensure that this alliance is well thought out and planned and will lead into the next decade and beyond.

Peter Cook, Chair, asked how the branding would look once the alliance of the two Museums is completed. Mr. Zietsman replied that it will be a comprehensive, enhanced vision of one facility with one identity – united, not separate. The Museum will assume a new name in the near future.

It is hoped that some of the Board members from MHM will find an affinity and join the AMY Friends Board. It is also hoped that some Board members may consider sitting on the Mesa Arts and Cultural Advisory Board. The Mesa Historical Society will continue to be a vibrant force in retaining Mesa's history.

Mr. Zietsman further stated the positive aspects of the alliance; we believe it will bring in revenue for the new AMY, as well as ensure that Mesa's history is not lost or minimized. Without the alliance, Mesa's history would be closed to the public. The alliance will provide new resources for our City Museums and allow the Historical Society to spread the history of Mesa throughout the City in locations such as the Libraries, Chamber of Commerce, the Arts Center, etc., providing exposure of Mesa's history to the public in downtown locations.

Vic Linoff, Chair of MHM's 501(c)(3) Board, stated some of the Society's concerns which included the care, preservation, and growth of its collections, and restoration of the facility, which was built in 1913 and is on the National Registry of Historical Places. The building has major restoration needs to the tune of \$2 - \$5M. Ramona Tecumseh asked if the Museum could apply for a grant for restoration. Mr. Linoff replied that the maximum amount the Heritage Board gives is \$150,000 in matched funds; not nearly enough to do what needs to be done. The Museum has applied for grants in the past to do patchwork repairs; however, there are no funds available at this time.

It was asked if the Serrine House could be opened and used to display some of MHM's collections. Dr. Tom Wilson responded that the Serrine House was closed during the first major budget cuts two years ago; however, once the economy bounces back, it would be an opportunity to consider incorporating and/or using the Serrine House as a place to display some or all of Mesa's historical collections under one umbrella.

### **Information and Discussion – Consider the Implications for Arts and Culture on the Decision to use Main Street Alignment for Light Rail.**

Peter Cook, Chair, suggested that with Light Rail planning a station right at the edge of Mesa Arts Center, the Board think of and discuss ways that would incorporate a reflection of arts and culture in Mesa; and think about some modification of the northern end of the property that would open it up, be more welcoming, and beckon people to enter the Arts Center's spaces.

Dr. Kent Layton stated that Light Rail has committed itself to presenting art and culture at every stop, and they pay for incorporating that. He suggested that the Board ask to have input in the look of the Mesa Main St. station.

Johann Zietsman said that there is a brochure available at each stop that points out arts and culture within walking distance.

Dr. Layton asked if we will have any input in naming the station. Rob Schultz, who is our representative on the Light Rail committee, was absent, so that question was left unanswered at this time.

Doug Brimhall asked about possible mini-art walks. Mr. Zietsman said that he has had a conversation with the City Manager regarding art walks. Mr. Zietsman recently discovered that in 2003 City Council approved an Arts and Cultural District; however, not much has been done to promote the district. Staff is looking into the 2003 Arts and Cultural District documents further to explore possibilities.

Peter Cook, Chair, reported that as a merchant in downtown Mesa, the feeling among the majority of the merchants is that as much as they hate the idea of streets being torn up and dealing with construction, the gain in the long run will be well worth it.

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer**

- Staff visited Dave Bang Playground Company to look at potential play structures for ArtVille and view a piece that will be on a long-term loan for the Family Zone. The piece has been installed and receiving praise from visitors.
- Opened "Every Bead Tells A Story: Christy Puetz & Beads of Courage" on April 10 with an excellent crowd that included a state legislator.
- On April 8, "Little Lands in Fabric with Arizona Kids" opened. This was a collaborative project with Mesa Public Schools and artist Denise Currier. Jeff Morris juried the 175 pieces of artwork and selected 25 to be exhibited in the hallway leading to the courtyard through August 9. There were 269 attendees for the opening, many of whom had never visited the Museum.
- City Council approved the new admission fee of \$6.50 beginning July 1. The \$1 increase is expected to increase revenue by \$19,000.
- The Museum received \$3,000 from M & I Bank Foundation for Arizona Museum Friends general operating support.
- *The Arizona Republic* is the media sponsor at \$7,995 for "My Favorite Monster" exhibition.

- The new Cultural Pass Program has been successful at the Museum. In April, there were 932 who used the pass, with close to another 900 in May.
- The Target "3 For Free" continues to hover at close to 1,000 attendees in April and in May.
- Staff met with representatives from Free Arts of Arizona to discuss a collaborative partnership, with a "Free Arts Day" in November.
- Staff attended and offered arts activities at the Gilbert Global Festival on April 18 with over 1,000 guests visiting the table.
- As part of the Department's shared resources, Rex Witte and Jeff Morris assisted Mesa Contemporary Arts in taking down an exhibit, restoring the gallery, and preparing for the exhibit that opened in April. Michael Ramos from Arizona Museum of Natural History also assisted.
- The Museum exhibited at the City Hall at the Mall event at Fiesta Mall in May.
- "My Favorite Monster" opened with 209 attendees; the exhibit has been popular with all ages.
- An interim Museum Website has been launched with more flash and interactive capabilities. Staff also met with Vilocity to do additional upgrades on the site.
- Staff interviewed potential candidates for four grant-funded full time positions through AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). Sandy Johnson will be the Adult and Teen Volunteer Docent Program Manager, and Robert Tervolio will be the Exhibition Capacity Project Manager.
- Staff met with the Mesa Public Schools Arts Coordinator to discuss collaboration; and with Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC) to discuss a potential exhibition on their project "The Wings of EPOH" (a book of a little boy with Autism – EPOH is HOPE backwards).
- Working with Ron Peters (architect) and Brent Henderson from the City's Engineering Department on the upcoming renovation utilizing Cultural Impact Fees; lobby and ArtVille area beginning in August.
- On May 6, the Art Education graduate student Jacqui Baker completed her six-month internship which included overseeing the content and design of a new guided tour brochure for teachers, developing potential thematic tours at the Museum, and developing a downloadable PDF version of the guided tour brochure for on-line use.

#### Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- The Museum is experiencing a good year – best in terms of revenue and second-best in attendance. To-date, there have been approximately 139,000 visitors and approximately \$595,000 in revenue; \$80,000 over last year's revenue.
- The Museum's target for volunteer value this past year was \$260,000 (a formula used by the City to determine the value of a volunteer per hour). To-date, volunteer value at the Museum is \$350,000; a tremendous asset to this year's success story.
- "3 For Free" Sundays continue to do well at the Museum. In May, The Museum saw 2,448 visitors on Free Sunday. To-date, the year's total for Free Sundays is 16,000 visitors.
- In the two months that the Cultural Pass has been available, the Museum has seen 2,500 visitors using the pass.
- The Museum has updates to their Website with several new features; working on paleontology pages to parallel the archeology pages.
- In 2003, the Federal Building was donated to the City (22,000 square feet) which the City has not been able to use because of asbestos and other structural issues; however, the Museum has been using it for storage. The Museum had to move their stored items (collections, exhibits, etc., 30 years of stored "stuff"), as the City is now addressing the asbestos problem in the building. The Museum did a major house cleaning – some went to the dumpster, some were consolidated, recycled, etc., basically cleaning out all unused items that have accumulated over the years; the Museum will be moving what remains back in once the City has finished with the asbestos, but in a more organized fashion. The building still does not have A/C and other major accommodations, but with the hazardous materials removed from the building, the Museum can begin to think about future use of the spaces other than storage.

#### Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Johann Zietsman

- The Theaters will have some summer programming this year. In the past, summers were used for repairs and construction related maintenance. That is now completed and we can begin to use the theaters during the summer. This year we are testing the waters to see if there is a summer audience. Jewel will perform in July along with a few other productions and rental shows. The theater spaces are being used for graduations, recitals, etc. this year, which has increased rentals revenue this season.
- For the first time on this campus, MAC brought back Summer Arts Camp for Kids, which is well underway with good attendance. Kids spend the entire day on campus doing different arts activities, i.e., drawing, sculpting, pottery, etc.

#### **Director's Report – Johann Zietsman**

Once a quarter, each Department presents a status report to the City Manager (MesaStat). The Arts and Cultural Department presented budget and revenue numbers, as of April 30, last week; Johann Zietsman shared the Power Point presentation to the City Manager with the Board.

The presentation shows budget revenue, budget revenue following the mandated reduction for all Departments in January, budget revenue year-to-date, and the projected budget revenue for the fiscal year; budget expenditures, budget expenditures following the mandated reduction in January, budget expenditures year-to-date, and the projected budget expenditures for the fiscal year; and the variances on each category. The first slide also showed that Mesa Arts Center numbers excluded carry-over from previous years of \$1,389,387, and after a meeting with City Manager, Chris Brady, last October, an allocation given to Mesa Arts center of \$666,074. Calculating the carry-over and the allocated amount from the deficit, it would leave approximately \$860,914 as reserve for Mesa Arts Center in the next fiscal year. If the economy remains as it is now, the bottom line is in FY10-11, MAC will have no reserve. Clearly, the economy has played a major role in MAC's numbers, especially in ticket sales for live performances.

Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) was expected to have a deficit of \$633,112 (mainly for "indirect expenses"). Following the reduction exercise in January, the deficit was expected to be \$453,112; year-to-date, if projections hold, the deficit will be \$9,732 – well done!

Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) was expected to have a deficit of \$51,495. The City Manager did not impose a mandatory reduction on AMY in January; however, they did lower their expenditure figure at that time. After January, they expected to make \$78,856; year-to-date, if projections hold, they expect to clear \$123,203 – well done!

Combined, the Arts and Cultural Department's earned revenue is approximately \$1.5M down from last year at this time. The Department is watching spending closely and looking at new and innovative ways of creating new revenues at the three facilities.

As far as participation, the Department is up approximately 10 percent (%) over FY07-08. Attendance is up at the Museums; adult class numbers are up, while youth classes are slightly down from last year; rentals have exceeded last year's numbers already, as well as Stageworks and Mesa Contemporary Arts; Performing Live is the one area where numbers have fallen dramatically, again, largely due to the economy.

### **Report on Conferences and/or Meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information Only**

Peter Cook, Chair, attended a meeting presented by Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC) on an initiative they wish to have on the 2010 ballot that would increase sales tax for the benefit of arts and culture. If it passes, it could generate approximately \$60M a year to allocate to arts and culture statewide. There are issues to work through such as how the money would be distributed. Mr. Cook encouraged the Board to think of a model to use in distributing the funds. In his opinion, the model of forming a Board to review applications where organizations can make a case for their request could be considered. Funding would be based on a formula using their budgets. Johann Zietsman stated that type of model doesn't always work in all cases, for instance, Mesa Arts Center's 501 (c)(3) organization has its own budget that does not include MAC's budget numbers and would be a much smaller budget than say Scottsdale Center for the Arts. Dr. Kent Layton also expressed concern for small arts organizations that have small budgets and probably could use the most help. Board members were asked to give these issues some thought and see if they can think of any other models that might work in all cases.

Mr. Zietsman, who is on the Board for MPAC, reported that the initiative is still in the early stages of discussion. He encouraged the Board to learn about the initiative, as it will need the support of arts organizations and legislators. To learn more about the initiative go to the MPAC Website: <http://www.mpacarts.org/> and click on "Arizona Needs Arts and Culture" for facts and information.

Mandy Buscas reported that she saw "My Favorite Monster" and thought it was wonderful. She also reminded the Board to attend the opening Friday night of Mesa Contemporary Arts new exhibition "Archaeologica: The Disposable Museum of Jessica Drenk."

This meeting is Ramona Tecumseh's final meeting. She has served on the Board for six years. Peter Cook, Chair, thanked her for her many years of service and her participation on the Board. Johann Zietsman presented her with a gift card.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Johann Zietsman, Director

**Exhibit A****Arizona Museum for Youth    Mesa Historical Museum**

| <i>Parallel challenges</i> | <i>Parallel solutions</i> |
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**Short term realities**

1. Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY)
  - a. Due to economic realities, AMY Friends informed the City of Mesa that they are unable to fund Gallery Educators in future (which they have done through great effort for three years).
  - b. Economy (and other factors) have impacted AMY attendance revenues negatively – projected shortfall in 08/09 more than \$30,000.
  - c. Should the economy be similar next year, AMY’s revenue prospects are equally challenging – especially with a reduction in Friends-funded staff.
  - d. AMY management and staff have a number of creative solutions to address these challenges, but it is unlikely that all of these would come to fruition in the short term.
2. Mesa Historical Museum (MHM)
  - a. Despite valiant and significant development efforts, the Mesa Historical Society informed the City of Mesa that the Society has sufficient cash reserves and revenue to operate for about another three months.
  - b. Current economy, location and deteriorating facilities create the “perfect storm”, threatening closure by June 30, 2009.
  - c. Neither the MHS nor the City of Mesa can provide sufficient funding to support the Status Quo.
  - d. Creative initiatives such as “The Cactus League Experience: Play Ball” are threatened.
  - e. Valuable historic collections may fall in disrepair in the absence of significant support.

**New beginnings**

1. In order to boost AMY attendance revenue, and retain MHM capacity and collections, the City of Mesa will embark on a program building on the strengths of these two invaluable resources.
2. Having thoroughly investigated various alternatives (Federal Building, 51/55 Main, closure etc.), we have identified the best solution given the finite resources, short timeline and broadening vision for the role of Arts and Culture in the city.
3. We recognize that both organizations offer values and services much needed and appreciated in this community, and the City of Mesa does not wish to see either organization being closed.
4. A new, enhanced organization will be created on the foundations of AMY and MHM, which will expand our offering of experiences that can be enjoyed by young and old.
5. This new organization will be housed in the current AMY building, which will feature both historic and artistic experiences – in a single downtown campus in Mesa’s cultural precinct.
6. This new organization will be formally re-named and launched in 2010, with the transition process beginning as soon as possible (no later than July 1, 2009).


**Details**

1. The City of Mesa will carry the annual costs of one staff member, plus modest annual operational expenditure related to the added exhibits – to be funded from additional revenue (details still being considered by the City Manager).
2. The City of Mesa will expand AMY’s staff by the addition of Lisa Anderson on July 1, 2009, whose duties will include:
  - a. Plan and oversee the medium and long term management of the Lehi collection;
  - b. Plan, oversee and execute the transition to the new site;
  - c. Contribute as a member of the new organization’s leadership (under the current AMY Director) to create and manage the new, enhanced mission and vision of the new organization;
  - d. Continue to work with all stakeholders of the current MHM to ensure ongoing support.
3. The current Lehi exhibitions will remain open to the public until the end of fall 2009.
4. After closing the Lehi site, the “Play Ball” exhibit will move to the AMY building, to open in January 2010 – in time for spring training.
5. The remainder of the Lehi collection will be subject to a plan designed by the MHM stakeholders, but will include:
  - a. Transfer of ownership (and responsibility) of all collections and facilities to the City of Mesa (timeline to be determined);
  - b. Ongoing protection (security, facility maintenance etc.) of the Lehi facility and collections through in-kind support from the City of Mesa;



- c. An ongoing rotation of curated elements of the Lehi collections to public spaces, such as libraries, City Hall, Mesa CVB, Mesa Arts Center, Arizona Museum of Natural History etc. ("take the history to where the public is").
  - d. Part-time, MHS-funded staff at Lehi to assist with these duties for as long as is appropriate – to be discussed between MHS and MHM staff as soon as possible.
- 6. AMY will present "Play Ball" in their South Gallery, and develop ways to include more historic elements (including "Wallace and Ladmo" etc.) in their future planning.
- 7. A Memorandum of Understanding may be drawn up to guide the relationship between the City of Mesa and the MHS in the short term, until the future of the MHS has been decided by the relevant members.
- 8. It is our desire to continue the positive, constructive relationship the MHS has offered the MHM, and the Friends offered the City of Mesa – this is invaluable!
- 9. The City of Mesa will coordinate all information to the public and the press.
- 10. A full presentation will be made to the City Council on April 30, 2009 – to which all are invited.

## Exhibit B

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|  | <b>Fact Sheet</b>   |
|   | <b>From the Office of Public Information &amp; Communications</b>   |
| <b>Topic/Issue:</b>   | <b>Expanding Mesa's Story</b>   |
| <b>General Statement:</b>   | <p>The Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) and the Mesa Historical Museum (MHM) are facing serious financial challenges. Arizona Museum for Youth Friends, Inc. is unable to sustain current levels of financial support and museum attendance revenue in FY 08/09 is down approximately \$30,000 due to the economy and other factors. MHM revenue is down due to the economy, location and Lehi facility maintenance costs. The Mesa Historical Society (MHS) is unable to sustain MHM operations beyond June, 2009. Both museum boards approached the City about their financial challenges.</p> <p>Mesa City Council has given direction to expand AMY's mission to include elements of Mesa's history ("art &amp; history for young &amp; old"). The MHM Lehi facility will close to the public in October, 2009. The Cactus League exhibit will be moved to AMY and reopen in February, 2010. Existing MHM collections will be rotated to public spaces in the City. AMY's staff will be enhanced by adding the current MHM director to the new position. The City will offer support pertaining to facility maintenance, security, marketing, etc. Additional revenues will be used to offset additional costs.</p>   |
| <b>Facts:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are several short term concerns for both museums. FY 09/10 will be very challenging for AMY without current levels of funding from Friends. MHM faces closure by July, 2009. Mesa could lose valuable AMY resources and unique historic collections. "The Cactus League Experience: Play Ball" could be lost.</li> <li>• The current model for history museums throughout the country is not working. This is demonstrated by declining attendance figures. "Expanding Mesa's Story" is an opportunity to "rethink" how the City presents its history to the public.</li> <li>• The City recognizes the importance of preserving Arizona Museum for Youth and the rich and diverse history of Mesa.</li> <li>• The new museum collaboration will use existing revenues, existing sponsorships, and additional revenue. The Cactus League exhibit will be open in time for spring training when attendance is projected to increase sharply. Additional revenues will be used to offset additional costs.</li> <li>• The city will maintain the Lehi facility, as well as the valuable historic collections housed in this historic facility. The relevant stakeholders will develop a plan to guide future actions regarding the collections.</li> </ul> |

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|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements of Mesa’s historic collections will be displayed in public spaces throughout the city (taking history to where people are).</li> <li>• This is a unique opportunity for “Expanding Mesa’s Story.” It builds on the strengths of both museums. It expands AMY’s mission to include elements of Mesa’s history. It preserves the “Cactus League” exhibit in the downtown cultural precinct.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Key Contacts:</b> | <p>Johann Zietsman,<br/>Mesa Arts and Cultural Director<br/>480.644.6601</p> <p>Steve Wright, Director,<br/>Public Information &amp; Communications<br/>480.644.2069</p>   |